

MAINE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Small Community Grant Program

Frequently Asked Questions

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What is the Small Community Grant Program?

The Small Community Grant Program is a water pollution control program administered by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection. The program may provide financial and technical assistance in solving wastewater disposal problems in unsewered areas. Grants for 25 to 100% of the replacement costs of a year round residence, 25% to 50% of a business, and 25% to 50% of a seasonal or second home are available for qualifying systems. Property owners benefiting from the grants must have a taxable income of \$40,000 or less, although technical assistance is available to anyone. The maximum project size which can be funded in a single year is \$100,000. The goal of the small community grant program is to improve water quality, protect public health, and open shellfishing areas which are affected by wastewater discharges.

Who can apply for a small community grant?

A municipality(a city or town government) may apply for a grant on behalf of residents who own property within the municipal limits. A quasi-municipal organization, such as a sewer district, may also apply for a grant for problems within the district boundaries. For unorganized territories, the county commissioners may apply for a grant. Individual property owners are not eligible to receive a grant directly, although the funding may be used to construct individual septic systems.

What types of wastewater disposal problems are eligible for grant assistance?

Discharges of untreated or partially treated sewage which flow into public drinking water supplies, shellfishing areas, or other waterbodies, or which cause a public health hazard, are eligible to receive assistance if the property owners meets the income qualifications.

What types of problems are not eligible for grant funding?

The program may not be used to construct septic systems for new homes or those which have been unoccupied during the previous year, or to replace or improve septic systems which are not malfunctioning and causing a public nuisance, or for buildings constructed or placed on the site after July 1, 1974 which did not install a system in compliance with the Maine Subsurface Wastewater Disposal Rules. **The grant program cannot pay back the cost of work done before a grant is awarded.**

What are the incomes limits for inclusion in the program?

The grant program may be used to help fund small municipally owned and operated treatment facilities which collect user fees, or for privately owned septic systems. For municipal systems which collect user fees the grant percentage

is 90%. For privately owned systems, income determines the grant percentage. For residences, income is the sum of all the owner's taxable income from the previous year. For commercial properties, the income limit is based on gross profit. These are both specific lines on the federal income tax return. The percentage of the eligible costs that the grant can pay are based on the income information as follows:

ANNUAL INCOME (TAXABLE INCOME)	SINGLE FAMILY DWELLING	SEASONAL DWELLING
\$0 TO \$5,000	100%	50%
\$5,001 TO \$20,000	90%	50%
\$20,001 TO \$30,000	50%	25%
\$30,001 TO \$40,000	25%	25%
\$40,001 OR MORE	0%	0%

ANNUAL INCOME (GROSS PROFIT)	COMMERCIAL ESTABLISHMENT
\$0 TO \$50,000	50%
\$50,001 TO \$100,000	25%
\$100,001 OR MORE	0%

What costs are eligible for the grant?

The grant will pay a percentage, based on the income limitations, of the following costs:

- Design
- Construction of replacement systems to serve the existing use of the property
- Administrative costs such as advertising for bids
- External plumbing to connect to the system
- External plumbing permits
- Recording fee for recording program easement
- Additional inspection fees beyond the minimum requirements of the plumbing code

What costs are not eligible for the grant?

The grant will not pay for the following costs:

- Construction expenses incurred by the owner prior to department approval of an application for funding.
- Internal plumbing
- Easement or land acquisition costs.
- Excessive restoration or other costs beyond the minimum amount necessary to comply with the Maine Subsurface Wastewater Disposal Rules.

How can I apply for a grant?

Grants may not be made directly to individuals. You need to contact your town officials (or county commissioners in unorganized areas) and ask them to apply for a grant on your behalf.

If the application is approved for funding and the bond issue that funds the program is approved, a grant will be available to the town during the next construction season.

My malfunctioning system needs to be fixed right away. Can it be funded immediately?

Emergency requests received from the town will be considered if funding is available. To qualify as an emergency a problem must be determined by DEP to present a severe immediate threat to public health which can't wait for future funding. Funding is extremely limited for this situation and may not be available